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August 9, 2018

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
1615 Capitol Avenue
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, California 95899-7377

RE: SB 212 (Jackson): Solid waste: pharmaceutical and sharps waste stewardship (Support)

Dear Dr. Smith:

The California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) voted at the CCLHO Board Meeting on August 2, 2018 to recommend a Support position on SB 212 (Jackson). This bill would establish a statewide pharmaceutical and sharps waste stewardship program and would help address the significant issues resulting from used sharps and leftover medications that are not properly secured and disposed of.

CCLHO recognizes that pharmaceutical and sharps serve a vital need in protecting and preserving the health of Californians; however, it is also imperative that steps be taken to prevent the inherent risks that occur when these products become waste. Despite the fact that California law (SB 1305 in 2006) has prohibited home-generated sharps waste from being disposed of in trash or recycling containers, millions of used needles are estimated to be thrown into the trash in California each year, resulting in an unacceptable risk of needle stick injuries.

SB 212 would help address the large number of problems that exist due to the lack of a statewide system to manage these products at the end of their useful life. By requiring manufacturers of sharps and pharmaceutical drugs to create, fund, and participate in a statewide take-back system, this bill would take a groundbreaking step to ensure that California residents throughout the state have access to safe, convenient disposal methods of sharps and drugs, and would help address important public health concerns.

In addition, CCLHO strongly supports the current allowance in SB 212 (July 23, 2018 amended version) that enables the continuation of local stewardship programs enacted prior to April 18, 2018. This allowance will enable local jurisdictions with existing stewardship programs to make the determination of which program (the statewide program or the existing local stewardship program) is the best fit for the jurisdiction's specific needs.

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CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, commissions, and officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by phone at 530-265-7154 or by email at ken.cutler@co.nevada.ca.us. Thank you.

Sincerely and on behalf of the CCLHO membership,

Original signed by Dr. Ken Cutler

Ken Cutler, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers

cc: Scott Smithline, Director, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery